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ABSTRACT

A 72-member team of evaluators visited Georgia State University in May 1977 as part of the institution's decennial self-study. The evaluators represented nine groups that accredit programs at the university, including: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; Georgia State Department of Education; American Dietetic Association; American Physical Therapy Association; National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences; American Association of Medical Assistants; American Psychological Association; National Association of Schools of Music; and National Association of Schools of Art. These evaluators were surveyed after the visit to provide insight into the process and to aid both accrediting agencies and institutions concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of a coordinated visit. A majority of the visitors concluded that the coordinated visit was more beneficial to the institution than to the agencies involved. The most commonly-cited disadvantage was the problem of scheduling interviews with key university personnel and time problems in completing interviews. (LBH)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COORDINATED ACCREDITING VISIT TO GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY BY VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

REPORT 78-2

by

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Atlanta, Georgia

August, 1977

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a joint visitation for accreditation by two or more accrediting agencies is not especially new. Certainly, it has become quite common for one or two specialized or programmatic agencies to visit a campus in tandem with a regional accreditation group. So, there is a basis of experience with the coordinated or joint visit. In recent months, however, a stronger effort has been put forth by some of the regional accrediting agencies with much encouragement from the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) to persuade institutions, especially universities, to attempt a coordinated visit by several accrediting agencies.

In 1975 Georgia State University initiated its decennial self study preparatory to a visit by a committee from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Early in the process the institution entered into discussions with the Executive Secretary of the Commission to examine the possibility of bringing together as many of the programmatic or specialized agencies as possible for a joint visit with the SACS group in the spring of 1977. Ultimately a decision was made to move ahead with a plan.

Step 1 consisted of a survey of all agencies which accredited programs at Georgia State University, to determine their willingness to participate and to rearrange their own calendar of visitations in order to join in the spring visitation already set for SACS. It was discovered that there was much interest in the venture, and ultimately a total of nine accrediting groups agreed to send their committees the first week of May, 1977. They were:

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
Georgia State Department of Education (GSDE)
American Dietetic Association (ADA)
American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)
American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA)
American Psychological Association (APA)
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)
National Association of Schools of Art (NASA)

In step 2 these agencies agreed to work under the general chairmanship of the SACS visiting committee chairman so that a coordinated visit for visiting groups could be established. At this time, the only basic agreement was that each agency would accept the dates and would be prepared to accept some general scheduling arrangements to be worked out by the SACS chairman and the institution to expedite the work of all committees. In Step 3, at the institutional level, as a part of the self-study process, plans were made to provide all of the special reports necessary to comply with the guidelines established by the various agencies for their visitation. This meant that some individual departments and schools were preparing for this visit at the same time they were preparing materials for the University's self study. Step 4 consisted of logistical arrangements made by the institution to assist this large body of 72 evaluators to manage their time and carry out their responsibilities.

The goals of this experiment were limited in that they did not attempt to provide for joint accreditation or for a complete merging of the activities of each group. In effect, each agency still carried out its own individual functions according to its own requirements, agreeing only to share as much information as possible and to hold joint meetings when feasible. Each agency also attempted to shape its schedule of interviews to some extent in order to match the plan worked out by the University.

Following the visitation it became obvious to the University that some evaluation of this new process should be made. For example, what were the successes or failures of the effort at a coordinated visitation? What were the discovered advantages or disadvantages? In short, how well did it work? Hopefully, this report will provide further insight into the process and aid both accrediting agencies and institutions concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of a coordinated visit.

METHODOLOGY

A survey instrument (Appendix A) was developed to ask each visiting committee member about his or her experience in the visitation to Georgia State University on May 1-4, 1977. The participants were asked questions pertaining to: (a) specific aspects of a coordinated accreditation visit in terms of facilitating their work, (b) the overall effect upon their work, (c) whether they attended an exit interview with the president, and (d) the title of University representatives present in any exit interview they attended. In addition, the participants were asked to identify the perceived advantages and disadvantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies as well as to offer suggestions for improving the process.

The survey instrument was mailed on May 27, 1977, to the visit membership of all the accrediting agencies as well as representatives from the State Department of Education. A total of 72 individuals was queried. A second mailing was made on June 15, 1977, as a follow-up to insure a high response rate. The questionnaire was returned by 64 (89%). Of the 11 chairmen surveyed, nine (82%) responded.

The results of the survey are displayed in tabular form by agency, and total, as well as the chairman group for all agencies. The verbatim transcripts to open-ended questions are provided in Appendix B and were

the basis for the summarization of perceived advantages and disadvantages of a coordinated visit and suggestions for improving the process.

RESULTS FROM RESPONSES OF CHAIRMEN

Table 1, below, presents the responses of the combined chairman group of agencies involved in the coordinated accreditation visit of multiple agencies to Georgia State University. The highlights of this table are:

* Chairmen generally viewed the various aspects of the coordinated visit as being facilitative.
* The chairmen were almost equally divided in either perceiving the role of SACS on the work of their agencies as being "facilitative" or having "no effect."
* The overall coordinated process was viewed as being very similar to the role of SACS. Most did not regard it as being "distracting," but on the other hand the opinions were split between either having no effect or being facilitative.

RESULTS FROM RESPONSES OF ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Table 2, below, shows the responses of the committee members by agencies to the coordinated self-study visit. The highlights of the table are:

* The response of the membership of various committees was very similar to the chairman group.
* The majority perceived these aspects as being facilitative: joint dinner meeting, work space at GSU, exchange of opinions and insights about the institution with other agencies, and sharing expertise with other site visitors.
* Most did not perceive the overall process of the coordinated visit to be facilitative, but few perceived it to be distracting. Rather, the majority viewed the process as having no effect.

TABLE 1

Responses of Combined Chairman Group of Agencies
Involved in a Coordinated Accrediting Visit

Aspects of the Visit	Facilitative	No Effect	Distracting	N/A	Total
Joint dinner meeting (Sunday	7	1	1	-	9
Joint meetings with other agencies (Monday)	3	3	-	2	8[a]
Joint meetings with other agencies (Tuesday)	-	3	1	3	7[a]
Joint Lodging	5	4	-	-	9
Work space at Georgia State University	7	2	-	-	9
Exchange of institutional data with other agencies	3	4	-	2	9
Exchange of opinions and insights about the institution with other agencies	5	3	-	1	9
Sharing expertise with other site visitors	5	3	-	1	9
Social interaction with site visitors from other agencies	5	4	-	-	9
Role of SACS team in the work of your agency	3	4	1	-	8[b]

The Process	Facilitative	No Effect	Distracting	Total
Overall effect	3	4	2	9

Exit Interview	Yes	No	Total
With the President of Georgia State University	5	4	9

University Representatives Present in any Exit Meeting Attended	Yes	No	Total
Executive Vice President and Provost	5	4	9
Vice President for Academic Affairs	3	6	9
Academic Dean	5	4	9
Department Chairman	6	3	9
Other	2	7	9

a Difference between this N and total N of 9 is due to no response to this item.
b Chairman of SACS excluded from response to this question.

TABLE 2

Responses by Agencies to the Coordinated Self-Study Visit

	SACS N	NCATE N	ADA N	APTA N	NAACLS N	APA N	AMA N	AAMA N	NASM N	NASA N	GSDE N	TOTAL N	TOTAL (%)
Joint Dinner Meeting (Sunday)													
Facilitative	15	6	2	3	3	2	-	-	2	2	7	42	(66.7)
No effect	4	4	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	5	18	(28.5)
Distracting	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(1.6)
Not applicable	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	(3.2)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	12	63	(100.0)
Joint Meetings with Other Agencies (Monday)													
Facilitative	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	13	(21.3)
No effect	12	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	5	26	(42.6)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	3	(4.9)
Not applicable	3	3	1	2	3	2	-	1	1	-	3	19	(31.2)
Total	18	11	2	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	61	(100.0)
Joint Meetings with Other Agencies Tuesday													
Facilitative	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	7	(11.7)
No effect	12	4	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	2	4	26	(43.3)
Distracting	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	4	(6.7)
Not applicable	6	3	1	1	3	2	-	1	1	1	4	23	(38.3)
Total	18	10	2	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	60	(100.0)
Joint Lodging													
Facilitative	7	3	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	16	(25.4)
No effect	12	8	3	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	4	39	(61.9)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not applicable	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	8	(12.7)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	12	63	(100.0)
Work Space at GSU													
Facilitative	13	7	1	3	1	-	1	1	2	3	12	44	(69.9)
No effect	6	3	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	14	(22.2)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not applicable	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	5	(7.9)
Total	19	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	63	(100.0)
Exchange of Institutional Data with Other Agencies													
Facilitative	7	10	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	8	29	(47.5)
No effect	8	-	1	2	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	17	(27.9)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	(1.6)
Not applicable	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	2	14	(23.0)
Total	19	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	2	12	61	(100.0)

Exchange of Opinions and Insights about the Institution with Other Agencies	SACS N	NCATE N	ADA N	APTA N	NAACLS N	APA N	AMA N	AAMA N	NASM N	NASA N	CSDE N	TOTAL N	TOTAL (%)
Facilitative	8	10	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	2	8	32	(53.3)
No effect	7	-	-	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	14	(23.3)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	(1.7)
Not applicable	4	1	2	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	13	(21.7)
Total	19	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	2	11	60	(100.0)
Sharing Expertise with Other Site Visitors													
Facilitative	10	8	2	1	2	1	1	-	1	2	7	35	(55.6)
No effect	5	1	-	2	1	-	-	2	-	1	2	14	(22.2)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	(1.6)
Not applicable	4	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	3	13	(20.6)
Total	19	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	63	(100.0)
Social Interaction with Site Visitors from Other Agencies													
Facilitative	12	4	2	1	1	2	1	-	2	-	2	27	(43.6)
No effect	7	5	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	3	4	24	(38.7)
Distracting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	(1.6)
Not applicable	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	10	(16.1)
Total	19	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	12	62	(100.0)
Role of SACS Team in the Work of Your Agency													
Facilitative		1	2	-	-	1	1	-	1	2	2	10	(24.4)
No effect		7	1	2	3	1	-	1	1	1	5	22	(53.7)
Distracting		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	(2.4)
Not applicable		2	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	3	8	(19.5)
Total		10	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	11	41[a]	(100.0)
Overall Effect of Coordinated Visits													
Facilitative	8	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	21	(34.4)
No effect	12	4	1	1	4	2	-	2	1	1	4	32	(52.5)
Distracting	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	8	(13.1)
Not Applicable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	20	10	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	11	61	(100.0)
Exit Meeting with President													
Yes	18	11	3	-	3	-	1	1	-	-	3	40	(65.6)
No	2	-	-	3	1	2	-	1	1	3	8	21	(34.4)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	1	3	11	61	(100.0)
University Representatives Present in Exit Meeting													
Executive VP and Provost													
Present	18	8	-	3	1	-	1	-	-	2	4	37	(57.8)
Not Present	2	3	3	-	3	2	-	2	2	1	9	27	(42.2)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	64	(100.0)
Vice Pres. for Academic Affairs													
Present	17	6	-	3	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	30	(46.9)
Not Present	3	5	3	-	3	2	-	2	2	2	12	34	(53.1)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	64	(100.0)
Academic Dean													
Present	1	8	3	3	2	1	1	2	-	1	3	25	(39.1)
Not Present	19	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	2	2	10	39	(60.9)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	64	(100.0)
Department Chairman													
Present	-	7	2	3	2	-	1	2	2	2	7	28	(43.8)
Not Present	20	4	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	6	36	(56.3)
Total	20	11	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	13	64	(100.0)

a Members of SACS excluded from this response.

Notes: Difference between N for some items with total N of 64 is due to no responses.
American Medical Association (AMA) Committee members are included, but they were not on an accrediting visit.

GENERALIZATIONS BASED ON WRITTEN COMMENTS OF VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Some generalizations can be formed from the written comments returned with the survey instrument. A majority of the visitors appeared to feel that the coordinated visit was probably more beneficial to the institution than it was to the agencies involved. This response seemed to relate more to the fact that the institution was probably able to save time and possibly money by scheduling so many groups concurrently for visits.

A thread of optimism was also noted about the prospects for the future success of other coordinated visits. Many comments were made that much was learned from this activity by the visitors which could assist them to make future coordinated visits flow smoothly. The advantages of such a venture to the agencies involved seemed to be related more to the opportunity for sharing information and the informal contacts made between the visiting groups rather than to the joint meetings which were attended.

The most common disadvantage mentioned was the problem of scheduling interviews with key University people and lack of time to complete the evaluation because of the extra pressures on the faculty and administration of the University to see so many different people.

Suggestions were made that more preliminary planning might be done between and among the groups prior to the visit to work out better understandings about scheduling and sharing the labor. Several members suggested that the size of the teams could be diminished if each agency could agree to accept certain evaluative information gathered by one or more members of another team; that is, closer cooperation among the agencies into a real team effort. It was recognized that this can only come about through future experience and through a willingness by the agencies to adjust their own

guidelines for evaluation into a reasonably common format. When this suggestion was made, however, there was usually the caveat that each agency must still retain the right to set its own requirements and examine the institution or program according to its own standards.

There seemed to be a general recognition that based on this experience, institutions can, in fact, coordinate logistically this kind of activity and can pull together a common core of information which is useful to all accrediting groups. Again, this can be improved by experience.

In summary, the comments seemed to indicate a positive attitude toward the process of the joint visit, and a genuine feeling that institutions and accrediting agencies should continue to work cooperatively toward the development of a sound plan for joint visitations. There was even some optimism noted that joint reports might some day be feasible. In short, committee members' comments indicated on the whole, that they felt the visit to Georgia State University under these circumstances was (in the jargon of education) a "meaningful learning experience."

SUMMARY

This report has attempted to provide an assessment of the process of a coordinated accreditation visit by multiple accrediting teams to Georgia State University in May, 1977. It is based upon the responses to a survey of the visiting committee membership of all ten agencies as well as representatives from the State Department of Education.

The findings may be summarized as follows:

(1) Most perceived individual aspects of the process as being facilitative, but viewed the overall process and the role of SACS generally as having no effect.

(2) Few viewed the overall process or any aspect of the process to be distracting.

(3) The advantages of a combined visit to the agencies involved seemed to be related to the opportunity for sharing information and the informal contacts made between the visiting groups.

(4) The most common disadvantage mentioned by visitors was the problem of scheduling interviews with key university people and the lack of time to complete the evaluation because of scheduling loads.

(5) Suggestions for improving the process included: more preliminary planning between and among the groups prior to the visit, reducing the size of teams, and closer cooperation among the agencies into a real team effort.

(6) There seemed to be a general recognition that, based on the Georgia State University experience, institutions can coordinate logistically this kind of activity and can pull together a common core of information which is useful to all accrediting agencies.

COORDINATED ACCREDITING VISITS OF TEN AGENCIES TO GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROCESS BY THE VISITING PARTICIPANTS

Georgia State University has recently participated in a coordinated accrediting visit by multiple agencies. Your candid assessment of this process will be of benefit to all agencies and institutions involved with the accrediatation process.

Pleare respond to the following items by checking the appropriate box [✓]:

- **In your current employment which best describes your primary responsibilities?**

  (1)
  - [ ]1 General adminstration in an educational institution
  - [ ]2 Academic administration in an educational institution
  - [ ]3 Elementary faculty/teacher
  - [ ]4 Secondary faculty/teacher
  - [ ]5 Post-secondary faculty/teacher
  - [ ]6 Regional accrediting agency
  - [ ]7 Programmatic or specialized accrediting agency
  - [ ]8 Other _____

- **On how many accreditation visits have you previously served?**

  (2)
  - [ ]1 None
  - [ ]2 One or two
  - [ ]3 Three to six
  - [ ]4 More than six

- **What agency did you represent for this visit?**

  (3-4)

[ ]01	SACS	[ ]07	AMA
[ ]02	NCATE	[ ]08	AAMA
[ ]03	ADA	[ ]09	NASM
[ ]04	APTA	[ ]10	NASA
[ ]05	NAACLS		
[ ]06	APA	[ ]11	State Dept. of Education

- **Did you serve as chairman for your agency team?**

  (5)
  - [ ]1 Yes
  - [ ]2 No

- **Describe these aspects of a coordinated accreditation visit in terms of facilitating your work by checking appropriate box.**

	1 Facilitative	2 No effect	3 Distracting	4 Not applicable	If you wish to add further comments about these aspects, please write those comments in the space provided.
Joint dinner meeting (Sunday) (6)					
Joint meetings with other agencies (Monday) (7)					
Joint meetings with other agencies (Tuesday) (8)					
Joint lodging (9)					
Work space at Georgia State University (10)					
Exchange of institutional data with other agencies (11)					
Exchange of opinions and insights about the institution with other agencies (12)					
Sharing expertise with other site visitors (13)					
Social interaction with site visitors from other agencies (14)					
Role of SACS team in the work of your agency (15)					

(Please continue on reverse side of page)

- How would you describe the overall effect of the coordinated accreditation visit upon your individual work for your agency?

  (16) [ ]1 Facilitative
  [ ]2 No effect
  [ ]3 Distracting

  Additional comments:

- Did you attend an exit meeting with the President of Georgia State University?

  (17) [ ]1 Yes
  [ ]2 No

- Check [✓] the university representatives who were present in any exit meeting you attended.

  (18) [ ]1 Executive Vice President and Provost
  (19) [ ]1 Vice President for Academic Affairs
  (20) [ ]1 Academic Dean
  (21) [ ]1 Department Chairman
  (22) [ ]1 Other _____

- What do you perceive as advantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

  1. _____

  2. _____

- What do you perceive as disadvantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

  1. _____

  2. _____

- What are your suggestions for improving the process of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation in evaluating this coordinated joint visit.
Please return to:

Office of Institutional Planning
Georgia State University
University Plaza
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RESPONSES FROM CHAIRMEN AS A GROUP

Q: What do you perceive as advantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

Definite advantage for institution to have one main disruption rather than many small ones recurring throughout the year. If properly scheduled, could reduce duplication of interviews.

Sharing information, more "bodies" to do the enquiry.

I trust there was advantage to GSU, financially and functionally in having the major accreditation effort combined. The compression of all these distracting operations into one time period must be beneficial. The advantage to the Southern Association could be considerable as the benefits of the supplementary agency reports accrue to the general knowledge of GSU operations. There is immediate advantage in informal comparisons made by agency teams during the visit.

Fewer demands on the time of top administrators of the University. Less disruption of the University as a whole.

Less disruptive to the University to have one concentrated evaluative visit. More data available than usual when NASM alone visits.

Minimum time for disruptive process, i.e., accreditation site visits. Accelerated effort for maximum review in minimum time frame.

The greatest advantage is in scheduling for the University, not only in preparation, but in carrying out the visit.

Generates less total disruption and probably less expense than a series of visits. Should ultimately be much more efficient (smaller committees with more expertise).

Q: What do you perceive as disadvantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

Difficulty in scheduling.

In our changing world, I doubt that an evaluation every 10 years is adequate. I would believe that one of the major evaluations, State Dept. Southern region, or NCATE, should be in between the coordinated visit of the other agencies.

There may be slighting of the special purposes and requirements of individual agencies in the overall effort to complete a major visitation. I did not see that as a problem of any consequence to NASA. We may be doing SACS a disservice in the slowness of production of our own report; although a summary statement was presented at the final meeting.

Full time must be alloted for each team to do its work. If joint undertakings undermine necessary investigations of team members, results are less valuable. Administrative personnel should be available individually for each team just as if separate team visits are being undertaken even if this requires night time availability.

Responses from Chairmen as a Group, Contd.

A major logistic problem is created; scheduling and coordination become more complex. Much confusion is created. The time spent at a given University in the case of our survey team was doubled.

It is possible that meetings and rituals could get in the way of the job to be done. The SACS chairman was particularly effective in seeing that this did not happen.

Accelerated effort for maximum review in minimum time frame. Perhaps less than routine time was allocated to program review and site visitation due to constraints of time available over the specified days of the coordinated joint visit.

When visits with academic deans are scheduled jointly with other teams, some monopolize the time, therefore limiting specific information to be gained. These sessions require more time collectively. This time may be used to better advantage if scheduled individually by team.

Coordinated joint visits are difficult to coordinate because agencies are conditioned to established procedures and in a compressed time allowance the full potential value of joint visits is not realized. In some cases evaluations overlap and conceivably result in conflicting opinions (some agencies are quite rigid and dwell on 'minor' issues while others have different philosophies).

Q: <u>What are your suggestions for improving the process of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies</u>?

This was not a <u>joint</u> visit but a coordinated multiple agency visit. A joint visit should have had one or two persons representing all the Allied Health agencies, interview the administration officials, support common services, etc., and report back to each team captain. As it was, there was, no doubt, a lot of duplicated effort.

The chairman of the coordination should be a university faculty person. He/she should have the standards and form of all the agencies and know exactly what each team needs to know! Perhaps a meeting of the University coordinator and several team chairmen could be arranged at a professional convention previous to the visit.

Perhaps negative considerations will come to mind later, but the novel element of this first test made me feel very positive about the visit. Seriously, your own very thorough preparation and attention to detail would serve as a fine example for future combined visits. My team was strongly impressed by your own leadership as well as the cooperative attitude of all GSU people. They made it all much easier, and I thank you for it.

Responses from Chairmen as a Group, Contd.

If evaluative criteria were somewhat standardized or specific questions developed which could be generally applicable, and individual assignments made to avoid overlap, then scheduling devised to permit agencies to share observations before deadline for reports--then more efficiency would be realized--total committee size could be reduced drastically if visit were extended another day or so to permit effective cooperation.

Responses from Committee Memberships

Q: What do you percieve as advantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

AAMA

I had virtually no contact with others. Was there only for one program in one school.

NCATE

Exchange of data--saving time and effort--thus greater efficiency in time allowed. Economy.

The sense of a larger mission by the various team members. Narrows the disruption of many visits to one period of time.

Exchange of information and ideas with the other agencies.

Major advantage to university in terms of time, effort, money, energy.

Some information sharing, economy of time by GSU. No real disadvantages perceived. Just don't see that advantages are very great, either.

Interaction between some agencies was an advantage. In spite of the tremendous pressure you must have been under, it must have been easier planning for the visitations at one time.

A definite advantage to the institution.

Sharing insights and information with other agencies.

The chief advantage would seem to be to the University which was able to get everything together at one time and get it over quickly. Things did not have to be duplicated. Materials gathered for one agency would be available to others doing the same thing.

NASA

Most advantages are for the University; cost, disruption, etc.

Dollar savings. Avoid duplication of efforts in self-study.

AMA

A time block can be allocated to complete all necessary accreditations limiting distractions for faculty and administration to one time a year.

APTA

It provides the institution an opportunity to look at itself as a whole, as well as its many parts; thereby broadening the views of all. Keeps the disruption of the normal flow of life to three days instead of spread out over the whole year. (This could be positive or negative).

APTA, Contd.

Helpful to the University only.

NASM

In an institution, there must be many advantages in having all visits at the same time. It is less disruptive of normal activities, and it is probably more feasible financially.

NAACLS

The campus is interrupted by many people all in one time period rather than at different times. This saves time for administration. With the development of trust, various groups could assess the areas of their expertise for themselves and others and begin to conserve time and energy.

Given more time each site surveyor could utilize the expertise of others participating. From the University's point of view, the coordinated visit is the only way.

ADA

An opportunity to gain greater insight into the institution in which the program is located.

Interchange with other disciplines. Easier access to top University officials.

SACS

Fewer disruptions for University.

This looks like an excellent idea from the institution's standpoint, and in general, was useful to the committees to a certain extent.

It appears to me that the only advantage is to the institution being visited through concentrated disruption and reduction of total yearly visitors.

Reduce the number of interruptions to the institution. Might assist the academic disciplines in their work.

Additional expertise available.

Allow institution to prepare material which can serve needs of multiple accrediting agencies. Minimizes disruption of University schedule by concentrating visits into one visit.

Reduces the amount of University staff and faculty disruption. Self-study reports can be coordinated and prepared at the same time.

SACS, Contd.

As a first time accreditation visitor, I have no basis for comparison of advantages.

Streamlining of the efforts by the University being visited. Curtailment of possible duplications of efforts. Additional professional input was available to SACS.

The advantages in my opinion, accrue primarily to the host institution: e.g., ability to coordinate one massive visit rather than several smaller ones, less distracting to faculty and students, etc.

Interaction and discussion of goals and objectives.

It saves time on the partial elimination of multiple administrative sessions. The joint effort allows the institution to get accreditation efforts completed in one time period instead of throughout the year or more.

My assignment was Standard IV and therefore there was little need to discuss this standard with the programmatic accrediting groups.

Library collections in more specific subject areas could be evaluated better. Library services to various academic units could be evaluated better.

None to SACS team, but I would assume there was an advantage to the host institution.

The principal gain should be evaluated by host institution.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

It seems to me that the advantages are more for the institution than for the visiting committee.

Lower cost to institution. Campus disrupted for only one week instead of many.

Reduction of duplication of effort. Ability to look at some components in more depth because of spread of responsibility in some areas.

For the institution, it saves time of staff. For the agencies, there is a common stockpile of resources.

It allows the institution to prepare one coordinated report.

Sharing information and expertise. Programs can be reviewed and evaluated in detail.

Save some time for University people.

Saves time and funds.

None

None

APA

None for our agency, except that administrators may have been better prepared to discuss area processes and problems with teams. Obvious advantages for institution to get it all over with at one time.

Preparations/presentations once rather than 11 times on part of institution. Better overview of total school than would have occurred if only our small team had visited alone. Opportunity for school to examine its parts in relation to whole, not isolated focus on separate departments or functions.

Q: What do you perceive as disadvantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

AAMA

I had virtually no contact with others. Was there only for one program in one school.

NCATE

Lack of time to properly plan how to work together and carry out such a plan. No opportunity to review roles in advance.

Overlap of interviewers with key persons in the University organization.

A question--do the teams see the "real world" of GSU or was the whole University "spruced up?"

None

I felt that the exit meeting was repetitious and that the University officials were tired of listening by the time it was our turn.

NASA

None

Rare in GSU's case--could be conflict if regional group ignored format or precedence.

AMA

Full time must be alloted for each team to do its work. If joint undertakings undermine necessary investigations of team members, results are less valuable. Administrative personnel should be available individually for each team just as if separate team visits are being undertaken, even if this requires night time availability.

APTA

Many changes in the master schedule which prevented some member agencies from attending joint meetings. Pressure on the administrators to attend several exit interviews.

Distracting, made key people unavailable, waste of time while one group waited for another to finish its interviews, etc.

NASM

No particular disadvantages. In the music area, we worked independently of other groups.

NAACLS

Individual areas may feel that not enough time was spent really looking at their specific area--the feeling of being short-changed. Meeting upper level administration in a large group prevents honest and earnest dialogue concerning specific questions needing clarification--prohibits or inhibits communication.

Unless appropriate time is allowed, the coordination efforts provide minimal effect. Some difficulty and confusion in scheduling appointments with University representatives.

ADA

Scheduling.

No disadvantages.

SACS

None of any consequence.

There is really no coordination to speak of except they are on campus at the same time. (The exchange of reports between chairmen might be an exception to the above).

Adds to the problems of the chairman. Increases the number of people who need and should be heard in a limited time frame.

Size of group.

Not aware of any.

Some administrators and faculty were interviewed by dozens of visitors which appeared to be too demanding on some.

As a first time accreditation visitor, I have no basis for comparison of disadvantages.

I did not perceive any disadvantages. However, this can be attributed to the efficiency of the SACS chairman. Had the chairman not been efficient, a coordination problem could have ensued.

None that I observed. Actually, the task I performed for the SACS group was not affected in any way by the true presence of other agency groups.

Exhausting for University staff.

None.

SACS, Contd.

The principal advantage is in the saving of time and effort on the part of the University being visited.

The group is too large to provide an interchange of information in the time period alloted.

None to SACS team.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I am not sure that there was a connection, but I was disturbed by the fact that no effort was made in Arts and Sci to give a meaningful schedule of when professors would be available for conference, and secretaries had received no instruction to assist committee, nor of their existence.

Difficulty in arranging interviews with appropriate personnel.

Basically, all agency representatives worked on extremely tight time schedules and had no time to spend coordinating, planning, sharing with representatives of other agencies. Several agencies, of necessity, had to interview the same University personnel. Hence, interview time was insufficient for all agencies.

Sometimes it dilutes the amount of time faculty and administration can devote to the visiting teams.

When coordination is not maintained throughout the total time.

Confusion resulted because of lack of knowledge of the real function of some committees.

Difficult to coordinate. Some folks seemed unprepared for visit, while others seemed to be waiting and wasting valuable work time.

Not enough to talk with faculty. Faculty unavailable by and large. No communication between groups.

It was obvious that priority status was given to one visiting committee over others. Thus, poor attention was given to some committees.

APA

None.

Cost--money, effort for planning.

Q: What are your suggestions for improving the process of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

NCATE

Chairpersons arrive early, plan meeting, exchange process. First meeting, Sunday p.m. be working session. People divide up. Chairpersons advance plan. Team members determine what information applies to two or more agencies. Work out individual plans in conjunction with master plan. I knew what I was going to do before I came. I could have been more efficient knowing my role in relation to State Dept., etc.

None.

If we are to continue NCATE and SACS as separate and virtually unrelated kinds of accrediting efforts, little real coordination can take place, I think. Down the road I would hope to see a real concerted effort to combine the function of NCATE, SACS, and SDE wherein a totally integrative approach could be undertaken (one report satisfying all three agencies; one big team with representatives from all three, etc.).

The entire accreditation process could be improved, streamlined, and I think, made more meaningful if the various agencies would get together on standards, requirements, guidelines, etc. There is a lot of duplication even though each agency thinks its area is unique. I looked at learning resources and music education for NCATE while someone from the State Dept and SACS were looking into one and NASM was looking at the other.

None.

More opportunity on the first evening to interact with other agency members to share goals and possibly arrange better cooperation in obtaining information.

Perhaps a single exit interview with each special agency reporting on its area and overlapping agencies adding any additional information to the original report so that the same things would not be repeated over and over.

NASA

You did an excellent job! Could not suggest more.

AMA

Make secretarial staff available day and night if necessary. Have professional survey teams agree in advance to topics and time for joint activities. Insure planning for individual teams with appropriate administrative personnel alone--not joint.

APTA

Overall, institutional exit interview should be attended by a larger group of interested persons, e.g., all accreditation team members, professors, instructors, and students. A better coordination of the master schedule to allow fuller participation of all interested parties to attend joint meetings, etc.

APTA, CONTD.

I would discontinue the practice.

NAACLS

What happened at GSU was really having many groups on campus at one time each doing its own thing. Some day we hopefully will get to the point of real coordination. You are to be commended for all your efforts. It was not the fiasco it could have been. Only time will tell the real benefits of this effort.

Time allowed for the site visits could be extended by one day in order to allow an interchange of information between, for example, the programmatic agencies and SACS. Individuals working in one agency group barely had time to complete our independent function. It would have been nice to have had time to confirm/discuss our perceptions with other related agency groups.

As a member of the site visit team, I perceived no particular advantages or disadvantages to the team. I hope, however, that GSU found it advantageous to complete this many visitations in a short period of time. If it was "worth it" to GSU, I think the trouble it took to coordinate scheduling and logistics of this magnitude might have been worth it. From a professional review body's viewpoint, both the "advantages" and the "problems" were GSU's.

ADA

This coordinated visit was extremely well planned and organized. As a process I have no suggestions for improvement.

SACS

Everything went very well as far as I could tell. This was my first visit anywhere.

The logistics for the institution must be considerable but they were well-handled by GSU.

If you want or need an exchange of information the groups would have to be brought together in a formal session. This would require more time and a desire on the part of the various agencies to cooperate. I would question whether it would be worth the time.

No comment, since it did not affect me or my task. I did enjoy meeting new people.

None.

None. It was well handled.

Schedule interviews at least one week prior to the visit. Three full working days should be scheduled for the visit prior to the exit interview.

SACS, Contd

Analysis of the responses to this questionnaire should shed some light on the necessary improvements for the process of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies. Conversely, I would be interested in learning the response of GSU to the coordinated visit--i.e., advantages, disadvantages, and suggestions for improvements. I thought this was a fine personal experience for me!

Keep up the good work!

Adopt similar format for use by the regional agency and the professional agencies. Use the format by college, school or program approach to place within the general institutional report by the regional body. Place the professional agency groups under the regional body chairperson in terms of drawing up a report.

More opportunity for informal contacts with members of other groups and more time to allow for interchange of information. While this would increase the length of visit, it should still decrease the cost to the host institution of separate visits by each agency.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ask personnel to plan schedules so they are more available to meet with committee members. Many were off-campus, out of town, etc. Better scheduling of students and personnel from employing institutions for interviews.

If programmatic evaluations are continued as joint efforts, more time must be set aside for initial agency planning and coordination. I got the impression that the only group pleased by joint accreditation was institutional reps, and none of the agencies were overtly interested in coordinated efforts.

Make certain that all team members fully understand respective roles prior to the site visits.

Fewer committees at one time, or better still, one at a time.

The coordination of SDE and NCATE if they are to be evaluating again at the same time.

After this experience I am opposed to joint visits by accrediting agencies.

APA

None.

Planning for joint visit appeared to have been handled outstandingly. Suggestion: At mixer or cocktail party at beginning, arrange something (including easily readable name tags) which would lead people to meet and talk with members of other agencies.

Supplementary Info

Q: What do you perceive as advantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

State Dept. of Educ

The sharing of data collected.

NCATE

A coordinated joint visit would mean a considerable saving for the University--savings in time, effort, energy and money. It would also mean fewer interruptions in the regular university schedule. It would help the team members grow and become more of an educational experience for all members to be able to share expertise, opinions, etc.

Q: What do you perceive as disadvantages of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

NCATE

The size of the group could get too large. Additional time would be needed for the joint meetings. There are some differences in the objectives of the visit by the various accrediting agencies. But, I think all of these could be overcome if the agencies got together and came up with a plan to meet the needs of each group.

State Dept. of Educ.

Faculty and staff did not have enough time for all those seeking information.

Q: What are your suggestions for improving the process of a coordinated joint visit by accrediting agencies?

State Dept. of Educ.

Prepare staff and faculty concerning the specific needs of the group. See that all faculty and staff meet projected schedules and appointments.

NCATE

The chairpersons of the various teams should meet ahead of time to plan how the teams can best work together during the visit--plan joint meetings, subcommittees, etc. Serious consideration should be given for providing at least one additional day for the coordinated joint visit.